

We pick up this story at the point when Vicki is dressed in her pageboy's outfit and tells the Doctor she wants to be a girl again. Only in my version this is not overheard by the Princess Joanna, nor is it the first time Vicki has raised the subject. Her persistence irritates the Doctor, and he tetchily reminds her that the disguise was adopted for her own safety. Vicki presses the point: surely she cannot come to any harm in the king's court itself. Anyway, she wants to wear one of those lovely period dresses! The Doctor is annoyed by her frivolity: the very idea! Vicki persists again, 'But I still...', and gets no further as the Doctor cuts her off: 'Are you questioning my wisdom, child?' Before Vicki can get her denial out, he continues, 'Yes, I can see that you are, and there's only one way to deal with this.'

In a trice, a startled Vicki has been hauled off her feet and over the Doctor's knee. He flips up the back of her page's tunic to reveal the seat of her two-color tights, with one bottom cheek white and the other black. A clear raised ridge betrays the lace edge of the panties beneath, and through the white material there shows a trace of their color: pale blue. 'Please, Doctor, no, not a spanking' says Vicki, but the Doctor is adamant: 'It's too late, my child. By now you should know better than to pit your own judgement against mine, but I see I shall have to remind you.' He raises his hand high to begin the spanking forcefully...

'Stop that at once, Doctor!' The voice of the Princess Joanna echoes across the stone chamber. She turns to her Chamberlain and, after a whispered order, he scurries away. Then she turns her attention back to the tableau of the interrupted spanking. The Doctor glances down at the squirming girl in his lap, and casts a disarmingly flirtatious eye at the Princess: 'I crave your pardon, your royal highness, that you find me unable to rise in your presence.' Joanna acknowledges the courtesy: 'You have my pardon, Doctor. But,' she glances at the about-to-be-spanked Vicki, 'I see that your ward has yet to receive like pardon of you.' (Vicki starts to hope that she might be saved by royal intervention...) Doctor: 'An insolent and disobedient child, your highness, must be corrected.' (...always provided that the Doctor doesn't win the argument.) Joanna's eyes pass across Vicki's horizontal form: 'Yet it is a pretty one withal. Such slender, straight legs, such round young buttocks...' (Vicki momentarily worries what may happen if Joanna *does* rescue her.) With a flourish, the Doctor produces what he thinks is a compelling argument to Joanna's medieval mind-set: 'The very place ordained by our creator to receive due chastisement when the need arises,' he declares as Joanna's Chamberlain returns.

'My thoughts are as yours, good Doctor,' says Joanna (and Vicki's heart sinks), 'and upon that motion I did direct my Chamberlain to fetch you this.' The Chamberlain hands the Doctor a small bundle of twigs, then leaves with a wave of Joanna's hand. 'A birch rod, that your chastisement may be the more effectual.' For once the Doctor is fazed: he had intended only a swift hand-spanking to make Vicki smart a little, yet he cannot refuse Joanna's offer without giving offence. Joanna prompts him: 'Lay on, sir Doctor. These pretty youths must learn their lessons well.' Then, as the Doctor reluctantly raises the birch to strike, she stops

him again: 'Nay, nay, I see you have but little skill in thwacking.' Vicki, who knows better, giggles loudly despite herself. Joanna shoots her a sharp look. 'A sterner master would have made a more respectful child. The rod will teach the best when used on naked flesh. Down with that hose, I say, and then strike home!' Vicki wails in disbelief. 'Now penitence begins to creep upon you,' says Joanna sternly, 'Too late to save your buttocks woe this hour, but pledge for your good life in times to come.'

Reluctantly the Doctor peels down Vicki's tights, revealing her blue panties edged with a wide frill of white lace, a garment quite unknown to the momentarily puzzled Joanna. And then these too are taken down and birch strikes bottom, rough, dark twigs contrasting with smooth, milky-white skin which is soon interlaced with a mesh of soft pink lines that extends itself with each blow. Vicki screams and kicks while Joanna looks on approvingly. 'To see such justice satisfies the soul,' she remarks.

Finally it is over, and a tearful Vicki is allowed to struggle to her feet, hose and panties drooping round her knees, page's tunic covering her modesty. The Doctor, feeling a little guilty at what he has been forced to do by circumstances, puts down the birch and gives her a paternal hug. 'A good lesson, Doctor,' says Joanna. 'Pert lads as these must have a sharp reproof.' Vicki turns to her and blurts out, 'Lads, maybe, but I'm a girl!' For a moment Joanna is stunned; then her eyes narrow and she turns on the Doctor: 'Why have you deceived us?' And so the story continues its TV course, with the Doctor justifying himself while, in the background, Vicki picks up the birch rod and examines it with a sort of horrified fascination.

We return to the action when Joanna is having her furious argument with King Richard about his plan to marry her to Saphadin. But in developing it, I'm going to cheat a little and pick up on something that only featured in the novelization, not the TV version of the story: the latent spanking reference in an earlier scene when Joanna sasses Richard and says (I'm quoting from memory here) 'I'm to be packed off, am I?', and he replies, 'Aye, packed off and beaten first if you don't behave.' So Joanna knows the score when she defies her royal brother.

The argument runs its course as on screen, and ends with Richard raising his hand to strike his sister; but in this version he has turned her over his knee first, before the delighted eyes of the senior courtiers present. 'This is a labor that has long been spared, because no man save we would ever dare perform it.' Roughly he tosses her dress up to expose her bare bottom - no medieval panties for her! - then glances up at his audience. 'Our hand shall be too mild an instrument of chastisement for such a froward shrew.' He smirks across at the Doctor, offering a joke: 'When first we met, good Doctor, you returned our golden belt to us. Would that now you could furnish us a humbler thong of leather.'

The Doctor smiles. 'Yet I have found, your majesty, that a stern palm, laid on with due vigor, can smack a bottom well enough to make its owner rue her naughtiness.' He twinkles at Vicki, but she is too busy twinkling wickedly to herself. 'Your majesty,' she says, 'will this do?' and pulls out from a deep pocket of her dress... the birch!

'We are obliged unto you,' smiles the king, taking it from her. Vicki

curtsies, and whispers to the Doctor, 'I didn't want anyone using it on me again, so I stole it.' The Doctor wags a finger, half strict, half amused. Meanwhile the birch whacks down on Joanna's unprotected bottom, leaving its familiar tracery of pink across the white skin. The princess yells and shoots Vicki a look of sheer hatred. Vicki returns the gaze unflinchingly as the punishment continues. Loud and clear, she tells the wriggling Joanna: 'To see such justice satisfies the soul.'